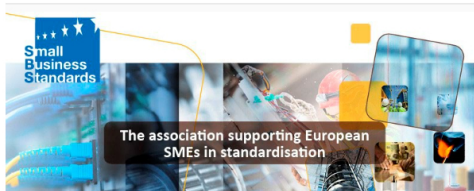


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Brussels, 3 September 2021

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

New studies show no alternatives to propiconazole: CEI-Bois, EuroWindow and SBS call for a renewal of the approval of propiconazole for use in timber windows and doors

Brussels, 3 September 2021 – CEI-Bois, EuroWindow and Small Business Standards (SBS) published an updated position paper including results of new studies scrutinising for possible alternatives for propiconazole in wood preservatives for timber windows and doors. The studies show no suitable biocidal alternatives for propiconazole for sustainable wood-based products in construction. Therefore, the three associations call for a renewal of the approval of propiconazole and extend their invitation for a public-private partnership to develop long term sustainable alternatives.

The expiry date of propiconazole was postponed from 31 March 2021 to 31 December 2022 giving the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) more time to assess. Part of this assessment is a public consultation for possible alternatives or substitutes for propiconazole. To feed into the consultation, studies were conducted in nine European countries to screen for suitable alternative wood preservatives over the past months. The findings of the studies are rather alarming for the wood working industry.

Two reasons support the necessity of the use of propiconazole in the wood working industry: The humid European climate and certain regulatory requirements as contained in several European standards such as EN 599-1 and EN 335 make it necessary to treat the timber sash and frame against fungal attacks. This also increases the use of wood in construction products and, more specifically, for windows and doors. Timber window and door manufacturers are currently using the approved active substance propiconazole in combination with one or two other active substances (tebuconazole and/or Iodopropinyl Butyl Carbamate (IPBC)) when impregnating timber. This combination is essential to keep the total amount of active substances at a minimum, limit the concentration of impregnation product and, at the same time, ensure a long service life for windows and doors.

The results of the studies show that there are currently no suitable products free from propiconazole or tebuconazole and IPBC. A ban of propiconazole would therefore be problematic for the wood working industry as both tebuconazole and IPBC are also under revision (the revision will expire on 30 September 2022 for tebuconazole and on 31 December 2020 for IPBC). A potential ban of propiconazole would leave the wood working industry without any biocidal product ready to use in January 2023. Many wood products would be left without an appropriate protection against outside factors, such as rain or fungi, resulting in rapid deterioration of the material. This is neither sustainable nor economically viable.

In its Renovation Wave Strategy to improve the energy performance of buildings, the European Commission points out that wood is a precious nature-based construction material as it can have double benefits of "stocking carbon emissions in buildings and avoiding emissions that would have been needed to produce conventional construction materials". In other words, the development is self-defeating the aims of the Green Deal to use more organic construction material and become the first climate neutral continent but also the proposals of the newly presented Fit for 55 package of the European Commission.

If the approval of propiconazole is not renewed, many users of wood material will be excluded from the market and may be forced to use other construction materials, going against the climate ambition of the EU. The reasons for the exclusion are the difference in properties by hardwood and softwood and the need for biocides especially for softwood (as explained in the Annex 1 of the joint position paper). A consequence would be changes in the type of woods used, as classic wood species originating from the EU (e.g. Sweden, Alps) can no longer be used in some cases and have to be replaced by other wood species originating from non-EU countries. For the users of such wood preservatives, the priority is about developing practical solutions ensuring the use of wood as a sustainable material and not about defending a specific chemical substance.

Therefore, CEI-Bois, EuroWindow and SBS support the following decision to maintain the relevancy of the timber window and door industry: Renew the approval of propiconazole until an equivalent substitute is available, tested and assessed for use in timber windows and doors.

CEI-Bois, EuroWindow and SBS would also like to renew and reoffer their call for a public-private partnership on wood preservatives to be initiated by the European Commission without delay, where public authorities and the industry can agree on sustainable alternatives to biocidal products containing the active substances propiconazole, tebuconazole and IPBC. A first inquiry launched towards the European authorities to find a new product to replace propiconazole in an appropriate amount of time was denied earlier this year. Nonetheless there is hope in the long run to come together to find a solution.

Read the [position paper](#)

*** END ***



EDITORS' NOTES: Small Business Standards (SBS) is the association representing European SMEs in standardisation. SBS is co-financed by the European Commission and EFTA. Its 21 members are national and European sectoral and inter-professional associations representing SMEs in 32 European countries.

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